

DISTRICT COURT (FIFTH DISTRICT :
WASHINGTON COUNTY) [1682]

NATURALIZATION RECORD BOOKS, 1896-1940.

1 microfilm reel

DESCRIPTION: To become a citizen of the United States, an individual normally filed a "declaration of intention to become a citizen" at least two years prior to applying for citizenship. The next step was the naturalization hearing at which the candidate and witnesses either made oral statements or filed written petitions and affidavits attesting to the applicant's character, worthiness to become a citizen, and the validity of statements made to the court. If the judge found the applicant eligible to become a citizen, an oath was administered and the individual renounced his former citizenship. At this point a certificate of citizenship was issued documenting the fact. These volumes contain documentation of the final steps of becoming a United States citizen. They include petitions for naturalization, certificates of citizenship, and accompanying documentation.

The first volume (1896-1903) contains only certificates of citizenship. Each form gives the date, applicant's name, former country and kingdom, current county of residence, and a standardized statement that the applicant had produced the necessary evidence and taken the required oaths. The judge then signed the certificate.

From 1904-1906, volumes consisted of an applicant's affidavit and witness affidavits, as well as a certificate of citizenship. The applicant's affidavit gave his name; current address; occupation; birthplace, birth date and age; port, vessel, and date of arrival; other U.S. residences; date and place of declaration of intention; and any U.S. military service. The affidavit included an oath of renunciation of allegiance to his former sovereign and a declaration that the applicant is not insane, epileptic, a pauper, beggar, contagious, a felon, guilty of moral turpitude, a polygamist, or anarchist. The affidavits of two witnesses acquainted with the applicant confirmed the applicant's statements and declared his worthiness to become a citizen. The court's order admitting the applicant as a citizen was included and a copy of a certificate of citizenship form was then completed reiterating this

information. Blanks are provided for the signatures of the individual, witnesses, judge, and court clerks.

After 1906, courts were required to use pre-printed forms in volumes furnished by the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization of the Department of Commerce and Labor (later the Naturalization Service of the U.S. Dept. of Labor). Each volume was to be indexed and the petitions numbered consecutively beginning with number 1 in volume 1. A duplicate copy was to be sent to the Bureau of Naturalization.

The petitions include the individual's name, residence, occupation, birth date, and birthplace; the place from which he emigrated, the date, port of arrival, and vessel name; the date on which he declared his intention of becoming a citizen and the name of the court involved; his wife's name, birthplace, and residence; his children's names, birthdates, birthplaces, and residences; and any previous petitions filed. The applicant was also required to take an oath that he was not an anarchist or a polygamist and to renounce his former sovereign. An applicant had to be able to speak English and have resided continuously in the United States for five years and in the state for one year.

Also included on the petition form were the affidavit of two citizen witnesses who validated the individual's petition information and declared that he was of good moral character. The printed oath of allegiance and court order admitting the petitioner to citizenship are also included. Later space was added for memoranda of continuances in the proceedings, names of substitute witnesses, and space to record the denial, not just the acceptance, of the petition.

Various corroborating documents had to be produced at the time of application and hearing. These are usually bound into the volumes along with the petitions. They include declarations of intention, filed earlier in a variety of courts in several states, of the individual's desire to become a citizen. Certificates of U.S. military service may also be included, as they could be used in lieu of a declaration of intention or to shorten residency requirements. The volumes also include certificates of arrival, required of those who entered the country after 1906, from the Bureau of Naturalization showing the individual's name, date, place and manner of arrival in the United States. If the witnesses who could vouch for his length of residency lived out of state, depositions could be mailed in. The depositions, which describe how long the witness had known the applicant and confirm his moral character, were then bound in with the petition and other forms. Correspondence is sometimes included, usually from the Bureau of Naturalization, detailing changes in naturalization law and procedures. Court orders revoking citizenship are also included. Box 3 includes two volumes, the second of which has come unbound and is contained in its own folder.

ARRANGEMENT: From 1896-1906 arrangement is chronological. After 1906 entries are arranged numerically by case number in sequentially numbered volumes.

RELATED RECORDS: Series 23596 , DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION RECORD

BOOKS, contains the first record individuals filed in the naturalization process. Series 23738, MINUTE BOOKS, provides abstracts of all daily court proceedings.

PROCESSING NOTE: This series was archivally processed by Jim Kichas and Michael McLane in November 2007 as part of a grant project designed to preserve the historic records of Utah's Fifth District Courts.

PREFERRED CITATION: Cite the Utah State Archives and Records Service, the creating agency name, the series title, and the series number.

CONTAINER LIST